

So I think the Irish Republic did a noble thing here. And they ennobled the people who agree with them and who still support the concept of a united Ireland, because they gave them the only chance they could ever have to achieve their dreams, and even more importantly, they gave them the only chance they could have to have a full life along the way.

The principle of consent and shared decisionmaking and guaranteed representation and now a renewed focus on the real challenges that real people face every day—I think it was a fine bargain, and a noble one.

Mr. Little. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. Grimson. Mr. President, thank you very much. We hope you are here soon.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Little. Maybe for the turning on of the Christmas lights, we'll be there. [*Laughter*]

The President. You know, if it were up to me, I'd come once every two weeks. [*Laughter*]

Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 10:55 a.m. from the supervisor's office at the King's County International Airport at Boeing Field. In his remarks, the President referred to former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the Multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Gen. John de Chastelain, Canadian Defense Forces, chair, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning; Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble; Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams; John Hume and Seamus Mallon, members, Social Democratic and Labor Party. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at a Dinner Honoring Mayor Edward Rendell in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

December 2, 1999

Thank you so much. Thank you, David, Bill, Mr. Mayor, ladies and gentlemen. It's a great honor for me to be here tonight. You know, I'm preparing for what it will be like a year from now when I am just a member of the Senate spouses club—[*laughter*—when I have to know my place more. And

I thought that there could be no better preparation than to come be the warm-up act for Ed Rendell tonight. [*Laughter*]

Let me say, in all seriousness, I am profoundly honored to be here. I'll never forget the first time I met Mayor Rendell here in Philadelphia in 1992 when I was running for President. And we were walking down the streets of a neighborhood where he had an anti-crime program going. And we shot a few baskets. We made very few, but we shot more. [*Laughter*]

And I thought that this—I have met a kindred spirit, because not only did we agree on so many of the same philosophies on crime, on welfare, on the economy, but we agreed on how public life should be conducted. I have thought about it so many times since, but I got into the political race for President in 1991 at a time when not just Philadelphia but the whole country was facing economic distress and social division, political drift, and then kind of the whole discrediting of the enterprise of government.

And I was really frustrated, as the Governor of what my distinguished predecessor used to refer to as a—of a small Southern State, when I would see all these people in Washington just sort of throwing brickbats at each other and, you know, struggling to get their 15 seconds on the evening news, which they know they could always get if they repeated the same thing over and over again and made sure there was a real wedge dividing the American people in all kinds of ways.

And it struck me that if we ran our business life or our family lives or our personal lives the way we were running our national political lives, the country would just run off the tracks entirely. And I was determined to try to go to the American people with a unifying theory of how we ought to do our common work, to create opportunity for everybody responsible enough to work for it, to build a community of all Americans amidst all the differences among us, and mostly, to get to work on our common challenges. And I went to Philadelphia.

I had no idea how I'd do here or whether I would be embraced here, but I liked it, and I liked Ed Rendell, and I knew that he was committed to turning this city around and to moving it forward. And we're walking

down the street having a discussion, not so much about politics but about what it would really take to get the crime rate down, what it would really take to give people on welfare the dignity of work without forcing them to sacrifice their responsibilities as parents, what it would take to bring genuine economic growth back into urban America.

Ed always says, well, you know, he couldn't have done it without you and then he says he couldn't have done it without me, and he talks about the Vice President and I putting the empowerment zone here and the 1,000 police and all that. That's all true. But the success that we have enjoyed here in this country would not have happened had it not been for leaders like Ed Rendell. And there is nobody in America—nobody—who does it better.

Along the way, we've become very good personal friends. He's always been there to try to help raise financial support for me and the Vice President, for our party. At a time when he might have been taking at least a breath, he agreed to our request to become chairman of the national Democratic Party. He has always been there. And I've thought about it. Near as I can figure, all I've done in return is make his wife a Federal judge, so she can't even campaign for him anymore. [Laughter] So I have disabled him as he has empowered me. It doesn't really seem fair.

I would just like to say one other thing. You know, in this wonderful life that you have made it possible for me to enjoy—and no city in America has been any better to me than Philadelphia, and the State of Pennsylvania has been very good to me and the Vice President and to Hillary and to Tipper. I have had the enormous privilege to get up and to work every day and try to make something good happen in America. But I have never been under any illusion that I could do anything other than create the conditions and provide the tools for the American people who really make this country go every day.

Today in this country, the most innovative, the most effective public servants are the best mayors, because they understand our common humanity and our limitless possibility and because people like you hire them

to get things done. And I just hope that we can continue to do that sort of thing in Washington. People ask me all the time—they say, "Well, you know, it's amazing how well the country is doing, and you must be a great politician." I said, "Well, a lot of it was we just showed up for work every day."

There's a lot to be said for just showing up for work every day and keeping your eye on the prize and remembering who the customers are and believing in the potential of this country. Philadelphia is at the heart of everything that's important about America, our history, our founding documents, our spirit. And it is altogether appropriate that in this remarkable time for our country, no city was better led, made more progress, or proved to be a better partner than the city of Philadelphia.

So I have a lot to be grateful to Ed Rendell for. Most important of all, from your point of view, is he proved that the ideas we shared would work with hard work and good will. And the results are here for all to see, embodied in this beautiful film. He helped to sustain our common political efforts, but most important to me, in the good times and the dark times, he was always there as a real friend. And when all is said and done, that counts most of all.

Thank you, and God bless you.

Don't sit down. This is going to be brief. But you see, you can tell which one of us is not really term limited. He tried to charge up here to the microphone and was going to deprive me of my one little role here of introducing him. But I still have a little capacity to pull rank. [Laughter] So this is my job.

Ladies and gentlemen, the person we all came here to honor tonight, Mayor Ed Rendell.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:42 p.m. at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to David Cohen, former chief of staff to Mayor Rendell, and H. William DeWeese, minority leader, Pennsylvania State House.

Remarks on Economic Growth

December 3, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Secretary Herman and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily, and especially, thank you, Marvin Dawkins, for your remarks and for the power of your example.

This is a very different time than we were experiencing 7 years ago this month. When I ran for President in 1992, it was a time of economic distress and uncertainty for our country. While some people were moving from the industrial to the information economy with optimism and purpose, many others felt fear and uncertainty because of the problems in our economy, high unemployment, big deficits, high interest rates, low productivity gains, falling real wages for average Americans.

Too many Americans couldn't tell the story that Marvin just told. They lacked the skills they needed to succeed in the new economy; they felt threatened by the changes; and they had no access to the tools that would lift them up.

But when I traveled around the country in 1992 with the Vice President, we saw a lot of signs of hope. We saw a lot of people who were winning. And we became even more convinced that our country, as a whole, could do very well in this new global information economy, if we could create the conditions and provide all Americans the tools necessary to succeed.

It seemed to me that there were three absolutely pivotal elements. First, fiscal discipline: We had to get rid of the deficit and get interest rates back down and get investment back up. Second, expanded trade: We had 4 percent of the world's people and 22 percent of the world's income; even someone technologically challenged like me could figure out we had to sell something to the other 96 percent of the people on the globe. And third, greater investments in new technologies and in our people in their capacity not only to know what they needed to know but to learn for a lifetime. And people like Marvin Dawkins are Exhibit A of the pivotal importance of that.

Now in 1993, we put in place a new economic strategy. It cut the deficit and in-

creased investment by eliminating hundreds of inessential programs and putting us on a path that now has given us the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. In 1997, with the Balanced Budget Act, we continued the strategy, again increasing investment, cutting inessential programs, first balancing the budget and then providing the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years.

Now that led to lower interest rates, which helped ordinary Americans in all kinds of ways. It cut the price of the average home mortgage by \$2,000, the price of the average car payments by \$200 a year, the average college loan payment by \$200 a year. But critically, it also cut the borrowing costs and the investment costs, therefore, for new businesses, especially for investment in new productivity-enhancing technologies.

At the same time, we negotiated over 270 trade agreements, including dozens of them involving high technology issues, all of which helped Americans to increase exports of high technology products—services. We promoted more competition in telecommunications, providing American consumers with the lowest Internet access rates in the world and fueling the growth of E-commerce. And we've taken actions that have led to the creation of a whole new generation of digital wireless phones, you know, the kind you hear go off in restaurants, movie theaters, and Presidential press conferences. *[Laughter]*

While eliminating hundreds of programs, we have almost doubled our investment in education and training, everything from preschool to dramatically increasing college access, to establishing lifetime access to training and retraining programs for people like Marvin.

Now, as a result of these actions and, most importantly, the innovation and the hard work of the American people, we are now experiencing an amazing virtuous cycle of progress and prosperity that few could have imagined. We are in the midst of the longest peacetime economic expansion in American history. If as seems highly likely it goes on through February, it will become the longest economic expansion in our history.